



## **Juneau Access Supplemental Draft EIS Public Scoping Meetings Summary**

This report provides a summary of the Juneau Access Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Study (SDEIS) Public Scoping meetings, conducted in Juneau, Skagway and Haines April 8 through April 10, 2003. The purpose of the meetings was to introduce the public to the Juneau Access SDEIS project, outline DOT&PF's plan and schedule, answer questions about the SDEIS process, and solicit written comments on the scope of the project.

The public scoping meetings were conducted in open house format. A number of display boards presented information on the history of the Juneau Access project and the purpose of the SDEIS. DOT&PF representatives and members of the SDEIS study team were available to answer questions. The presentation portion of the meetings was facilitated by Susan Bell of the McDowell Group. DOT&PF project manager Reuben Yost gave presentations at each meeting at 5:30 and 7:00PM. Each presentation was followed by a question and answer period.

Also in attendance from DOT&PF was Jack Beedle. Representatives of the consulting team included Dennis Papilion and Barry Bergdoll of URS Corporation and Jim Calvin of McDowell Group.

Following are summaries for each public scoping meeting. These summaries are intended to reflect the key areas of concern expressed verbally during the meeting in one-on-one discussions between SDEIS team members and attendees, and during the formal question and answer period. The emphasis of these summaries is on comments received concerning the alternatives and additional studies needed in the SDEIS. General comments concerning support for or opposition to a particular alternative are not addressed here. All written comments received from the public will be included verbatim in the Scoping Report.

### **Juneau Meeting Overview**

Date: Tuesday April 8, 2003

Time: 4PM to 8PM

Location: Mendenhall Mall

Total signed in: 44

Most attendees at the Juneau Public Scoping Meeting expressed either support for, or opposition to, road construction, rather than expressing specific scoping concerns. Scoping issues that were raised included the following:

- Cost of road construction and maintenance must be accurately determined.
- Avalanche hazard planning and mitigation should be presented in detail.
- SDEIS should provide a more detailed and accurate assessment of the cost of operating high-speed ferries in Lynn Canal (should consider the "hidden costs" associated with fast ferry operation, maintenance and 20 year replacement life).

- The need for the project should be more clearly demonstrated in the SDEIS.
- Assess the effects of increased vehicle (including RV) traffic in Juneau.
- Add the Taku River alternative to the SDEIS
- SDEIS should include an updated household survey, since opinions have changed since 1996 and many new people have moved to Juneau.
- Environmental impacts of the East Lynn road in Berners Bay must be considered.
- The source of road maintenance money should be identified, especially in light of the state's growing budget deficit.
- SDEIS should identify who will be responsible for public safety, EMS, trash clean-up and other services along the new road.
- The source of construction money for all alternatives should be clearly identified along with a discussion of what projects will go unfunded if the road is built.
- Visual impacts must be clearly documented.

### **Skagway Meeting Overview**

Date: Wednesday April 9, 2003

Time: 4PM to 8PM

Location: US Park Service auditorium

Total signed in: 93

Skagway residents expressed a broad range of concerns regarding the potential impacts of the East Lynn alternative. With respect to the SDEIS scope of work, these concerns included:

- Need for accurate and detailed road construction cost estimates (with explanation of how latest cost estimates differ from earlier estimates).
- Need for reliable road maintenance costs, including avalanche mitigation, and how those costs are derived.
- Taku River alternative should be examined.
- SDEIS should consider the ferry service scenarios outlined in McDowell Group's study.
- Thorough assessment of the cost savings to the AMHS resulting from Juneau Access (what will be the effect of lost Northern Lynn Canal ridership)
- Need to look at price sensitivity of ferry fares and effect of loading time on demand.
- Must consider visual impacts of the road.
- Larger sample size is required in the Skagway community survey.
- Include costs and benefits of road from Skagway to Haines in the SDEIS.
- Outline in detail avalanche risk and mitigation; factor in how frequently the road will be closed.
- Describe access to Juneau when the road is closed due to avalanche or rock fall.
- Consider the change in lifestyle and quality of life associated with a road and increased traffic. Need more detailed assessment of traffic impacts in Skagway.

- Economic effect on local businesses should be addressed in more detail than in the original draft.
- Look at the information from avalanche control on the Seward Highway to see if it is relevant.
- Would the East Lynn Canal Highway be an industrial use highway?
- Consider submarine archeological resources.
- Give greater consideration to the impact of East Lynn on Dewey Lakes recreational area.

## **Haines Meeting Overview**

Date: Thursday April 10, 2003

Time: 4PM to 8PM

Location: American Bald Eagle Foundation

Total signed in: 20

In Haines, most of the questions and comments focused on three general areas: the negative economic impacts of the East Lynn Alternative in Haines, the advantages of a West Lynn alternative (if a road is to be built), and the need for a road directly linking Haines and Skagway.

Specific scoping concerns included:

- The SDEIS should include greater analysis of social and economic effects of traffic to and through the Lynn Canal area bypassing Haines, including detailed assessment of the impact on the many local business that depend on highway traffic. *(The study team reported that the SDEIS would include new traffic forecasts and more detailed socioeconomic analysis, identifying which businesses might be harmed and which might benefit, rather than considering only the net effect of an alternative on the local economy.)*
- Add West Lynn as a reasonable alternative in the SDEIS. *(The West Lynn alternative is preferable to some Haines residents in that it would not result in a reduction of highway-related travel through the community, therefore the West Lynn alternative should be considered in the SDEIS.)*
- Add to the SDEIS a road link between Haines and Skagway, as part of the East Lynn and West Lynn alternative.
- Avalanche risks, mitigation and associated costs must be carefully considered in the SDEIS.
- Consider the vehicle noise impacts on Haines of the East Lynn alternative.
- Cruise ship industry response to a road should be revisited.
- Ferry service outlined in the McDowell study should serve as the ferry service alternative in the SDEIS.
- Consider the negative consequences of East Lynn on Haines' efforts to become a primary cruise destination.
- Consider the economic advantages of road access to Excursion Inlet.
- Analysis of West Lynn alternative should include reevaluation of ferry service needs between Sawmill Creek and William Henry Bay (Why are two ferries needed on this route?).

- Look at stopping the road at Katzehein and running ferries to both Haines and Skagway.
- Study the potential impacts to air carriers from a road connection.

### **Public Notice**

The Notice of Intent to prepare a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Notice of Public Scoping Meetings is attached to the summary report. The “Notice of Intent” was advertised in the Juneau Empire on March 12 and April 6; in the weekly Chilkat Valley News in the weeks of March 13 and April 3 editions; and the weekly Skagway News in the March 28 edition.